



U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

<http://judiciary.house.gov/>

News Advisory

For immediate release
March 29, 2006

Contact: Jeff Lungren/Terry Shawn
202-225-2492

Immigration Subcommittee Oversight Hearing Thursday on Whether Congress Should Raise the H-1B Visa Cap

What: Oversight Hearing entitled, "Should Congress Raise the H-1B Visa Cap"
Who: Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Claims – Rep. John N. Hostettler (R-Ind.), Chairman
When: 9:00 a.m., Thursday, March 30, 2006
Where: 2141 Rayburn Building

H-1B visas are non-immigrant visas available to employers to bring temporary workers to the United States who are in "specialty occupations" and to fashion models who are of "distinguished merit and ability." H-1B visas are valid for up to three years, and may be extended for one additional three-year period. In order to qualify for an H-1B visa in a specialty occupation, the employee must have a college degree or its equivalent. Employers who wish to hire an H-1B non-immigrant worker must first attest that it will pay the H-1B worker the greater of the prevailing wage for that occupation or the actual wage it pays similar workers, and must also attest that there is not an ongoing labor dispute.

BACKGROUND...

- ✓ H-1B visas are currently capped at 65,000 annually. In recent months, the business community has been lobbying vigorously for an increase in visas numbers for the H-1B category, which is primarily comprised of highly skilled workers.
- ✓ Proponents of increasing the H-1B visa cap state that highly skilled immigrants increase the wages of native-born citizens and provide an overall boost to the economy by making companies more competitive.
- ✓ Critics of the H-1B program oppose increasing the cap because they maintain that employers often use H-1B visas to hire cheap foreign labor, undermining job opportunities and wages for U.S. workers.
- ✓ Because fraud has historically been a problem with the H-1B visa category, Congress in 2004 imposed an additional \$500 anti-fraud fee on all H-1B petitions.

WITNESSES: Mr. John Miano, author of a study on wages for computer programmers on H-1B visas; Mr. Stuart Anderson, Executive Director for the National Foundation for American Policy; Mr. David Huber, high-tech worker from the Chicago area; and Dr. Delbert Baker, President of Oakwood College (Ala.).

####